

Interviewed by Kathleen Irving, June 4, 2004, at his home at 2301 North 3250 West
Transcribed by Marilyn Hunting, February 2005

KI: Mr. Siddoway, could you tell me the names of your parents and where you were born.

Laurence Y. Siddoway: I was born at the old power plant, at the mouth of Ashley Creek Canyon on January 20, 1914. I had two older brothers at that time. They were both born there. Francis was the older of the two and Ardath was the second. We stayed there several years. My father helped to install the equipment and did a lot of the work, including the power lines from the power plant that was built there, and power lines that came down to make the first lights in Vernal, and also to run the grist mill that was located on 5th North Vernal Avenue. They call it the Powerhouse now.

KI: Tell me the names of your parents, please.

Laurence: My father was Frank Siddoway and my mother Ellen Paige Young Siddoway. My mother was a descendant of Lorenzo Dow Young who was a younger brother of Brigham Young. He came to Salt Lake Valley with Brigham Young in the first group that came into the valley. He had two or three wives. One of the wives later on came here to Vernal and lived down by Ashley Creek on 5th East.

KI: Did she come by herself, without a husband?

Laurence: Well, she came without a husband, but she was one of the polygamists wives at that time and she came out here to stay with her son. Her son was named Edward Jones Young and she was an elderly woman at that time. She was buried here in the Vernal Cemetery, by the way. We go up every year and celebrate her burial place with flowers. A lot of the Youngs are buried there.

At any rate, my father helped build the power plant, and after it was constructed, he stayed several years and operated the power plant. Later on, when my two brothers got old enough to go to school, then we moved down into the Vernal area, south part of Vernal area, about 3rd South and maybe 2nd West, in that area.

KI: So your brothers attended Central Elementary.

Laurence: They went to Central Elementary. They both went together to school because one was six and the other was seven. Later on, why, I went to the Central School also.

Now, I'll tell you another little accident that happened to me which is very important in my life. After we got here, and as kids will be kids, my brother had an arrow and he put a needle in the end of the arrow and shot it and it hit me in the eye. We didn't have all the medical facilities then that we have today. But soon after that I got infection in the eye. My father took me to Watson, where the railroad ended at that time and we went over the narrow gauge railroad to Mack, Colorado, and then onto the DR&G Railroad, and into Salt Lake City. After they got

into Salt Lake City, and of course, this was several days after this accident happened, they had to remove my eye. So this was a real difficult thing for me to overcome.

KI: How old were you when it happened?

Laurence: I was about four years old.

KI: Just a tiny boy. So you're blind in one eye, but you look perfectly normal. How old were you when you moved away from the power plant?

Laurence: I was about four years old because my two brothers had to start school. One was six and one was seven and that made me about four years old. My father stayed there and operated the power plant for some time after we moved down into Vernal. Of course, they had to take care of those power lines that came down here so he was there for three or four years after that.

KI: Did he live there and just come down once in a while and see you?

Laurence: Right.

KI: How long of a trip was that to come down?

Laurence: Oh, that was about twenty miles, you know, on a horse, or with a horse and buggy or something like that. It was a long ways.

KI: Do you remember coming very often when you were a child?

Laurence: No, I don't remember any part of that.

KI: Do you remember what you did for fun up at the power plant?

Laurence: Oh yeah. We had the big rock. We used to crawl up there and roll down and wear our clothes out.

KI: Did your mom grow a garden?

Laurence: No, but they certainly always went fishing. My father was a great fisherman. He fished all the time and we had fish to eat all the time. I can remember bringing the fish home.

KI: Did you have animals, like a cow for your own milk?

Laurence: Yes, we had a cow. Across the creek, there was a family lived over there and they had animals and gardens and everything over there. They were some of the Hacking people - early families of Hackings.

KI: So you came down to Vernal. Did your mom just stay at home with you while your dad was

working at the power plant?

Laurence: Oh, yes. My mother didn't do anything but stay at home and take care of her family. Anyway, we lived there in a little house for a year or two, then moved down into another house on South Vernal Avenue. We were there for a few years, then we lived in a little house where the school district garage is [approximately 250 South 100 West]. There was a house there where we lived. Later on, my family, and I was grown then, they lived across the road in the old Carter home, which is on Second West and Second South.

KI: What do you remember about going to school? Tell me who your teachers were and what you liked to do.

Laurence: I don't remember very much about my teachers. But I went to school, I was a good student, I was a good learner. We went to that Central School. Early on, they had the little school, which was south of Central School. Central School was a brick building with two stories. In the sixth grade I went to John Stagg, he was the teacher.

KI: Was he there for a long time?

Laurence: He was there for a long time. That was in the sixth grade.

KI: Wanda Staley told me he was her teacher, too. So it seems to me that he must have been there for quite a while.

Laurence: He was a teacher there for quite a long time. He was a guy that was always telling about his war experiences. World War One.

KI: What subjects did you like?

Laurence: I suppose I liked all subjects, but I particularly liked English and history and mathematics. I was good in all of those things. I was a very good student.

KI: Tell me what it was like when you first got to school. Did you have to march into class?

Laurence: No!

KI: You didn't? They didn't line you up and play music and make you march in?

Laurence: I don't think anyone ever did that.

KI: How about recess?

Laurence: Oh, there was lots of kids to play with and fun to be there. After we got through the sixth grade, then we went up and the Jr. High school was up where the old high school was, then the high school kids were over in [another building]. That's where the present swimming pool.

That's where the old high school was. Anyway, we went to Jr. High school and regular high school at those places. Now, those building are all torn down. One was torn down a long time ago, then they tore the second one down.

KI: Did you attend LD seminary?

Laurence: I did not.

KI: Was the seminary building there when you were going to school, though?

Laurence: Well, the seminary, you had to walk down past the present temple building, and east of that was a little school there where the seminary was held.

KI: You know the building that's there right now where the Distribution Center is? Was that ever a seminary building?

Laurence: Not to my knowledge. The seminary building then was just east of the present temple, a small building there, but I didn't ever go down to the seminary.

KI: I just wondered what that building was that is there right now and how long people used it. [This building is located at 613 West 200 South.]

Laurence: That's a fairly new building in my book.

KI: When you were in junior high and high school, what did you like to do for extracurricular activities?

***Laurence: I liked to play basketball. Summertime we always played baseball. I was a pretty good basketball player too. In high school we had the championship team here, played in the State Tournament. I played with some pretty good players at that time.

KI: Do you remember their names?

Laurence: Oh yes. George Alexander, Lowell Fox was the Center, big tall, skinny guy. Chuck Oaks played. There all the same age as I was.

KI: What year did you graduate?

Laurence: I graduated in 1932.

KI: That was right in the beginning stages of the Depression.

Laurence: I know all about the Depression.

KI: You want to tell me about that?

Laurence: I'll tell you a little more about high school.

When we graduated we had a class of 84. At that time, that was a lot of kids, 84, and that was a big class. Scholastic, I was second in that class of 84. The only that beat me was Merle's cousin, right? Her name was Grace Slaugh. She was the only that beat me. They both came from the Goodrich Clan.

KI: Did you get a scholarship to go to college?

Laurence: No, they didn't have scholarships then. You just hoped when you went to college you could get a job.

KI: Did you go to college?

Laurence: I went one year at BYU.

KI: That was such a long ways from here in 1932.

Laurence: It sure was. You had to catch a ride with someone.

KI: Did you do it by putting your thumb up?

Laurence: A time or two coming back. I would have to catch a ride.

KI: How long did it take to get between here and Provo?

Laurence: Oh, I don't know, maybe 8 or 10 hours. It was a long trip.

KI: What did you study when you went to BYU?

Laurence: Well, primarily I was studying business courses, accounting, primarily. I have followed that line of activity all my life. I don't have anyone do my income tax.

KI: Can you go back and tell me about the Depression. You were doing all this during the Depression.

Laurence: I only stayed there one year. Money was short, the checks bounced. My father was helping pay part of my way. I didn't have a job there. My brother was living in Duchesne at that time and working, he helped pay part of my way. I was primarily working to become a businessman and an accountant. I took those type of lessons, economics, English. I was a pretty good student. I played basketball too. There were two Freshmen teams at BYU at that time, not regular teams but Freshmen Teams. I was on the first team of the Freshmen Group. We played all over. We played up at Heber, down at Price, in Salt Lake, over at Lehi; played in a lot of different places. Some of the guys that were playing - a couple of them were from Wyoming, one from down in Nevada. Chuck Oaks and I both played on that Freshman Team. We had a lot of

fun playing basketball.

KI: Where did you live when you were out there?

Laurence: Well, I first started to live with the Oaks. Later on I left there and moved up and stayed pretty close to the campus, BYU campus. In fact, it was almost right across the road from where the old campus was. Those were special times but I was only there for a year. It was depression time and people didn't have any money. Their checks were not good in a lot of places. They just kept the money, they didn't have the ability to get their checks cashed and move them back and forth.

KI: When you came home, what did you do?

Laurence: Well, I got a job. That was a big thing at that time and it paid pretty good money too at that time. I went to work in the gilsonite mines. I stayed there and worked — you worked on the top or you went down and dug gilsonite; one or the other. You made more money if you worked down in the mines than if you were a top hand. It was kind of a seniority deal, you worked awhile on top then someone would leave and you would get a chance to go down and dig gilsonite in some of those mines. Some of those mines were what they called the Rainbow Mines and then they had the Big Bonanza Mine. Well anyway, Rainbows was where the headquarters were. Homer Ford was the guy in charge. What I mean was - HE WAS IN CHARGE. If you didn't get there at a certain time at night the lights went out and if you were late getting there after the lights went out, you didn't work the next day. He was a czar.

At that time you made \$4.00 plus a day working on top, then if you went down and worked in the mine you made \$6.00 and something a day. You got paid more money by going down and working in the mine. I worked in several mines there. I worked in Thimble Rock, Colorow, what they called the Puck and 2 or 3 other mines. They had a lot of different mines. Some were little narrow ones that you couldn't turn a pick around. People were working in all of those gilsonite mines. Course, sometimes when they needed a different type ore they would bring us from Rainbow over to Bonanza and those mines were much wider. Course, they still mine ore out of Bonanza but they don't out of Rainbow. The headquarters were at Rainbow.

The Railroad came across the mountain and they loaded the ore on at Watson and then took it across the mountain on that narrow gauge railroad to Mack, Colorado.

KI: Did you ever ride on the railroad?

Laurence: Only when my father took me with that medical problem.

We always knew Slim Beaslin, he was the conductor on the railroad. Slim Beaslin, big, tall, slims guy. He is John Beaslin's father.

KI: Did you help load the ore or were you strictly a miner?

Laurence: We just dug the ore, it was brought up with hoists and put it on platforms and somebody else came and loaded it, either on trucks or on trains. The Jacobson's had a lot of trucks out there. They hauled the ore. A lot of ore was hauled right down to Watson and loaded on the train there. Jacobsen's and the Bank's owned most of those trucks.

KI: Is it scary working down there?

Laurence: No it wasn't scary. [laughing]

KI: Did you ever have any memorable experience. Those mines did blow up occasionally.

Laurence: That was over at Bonanza, where they had those troubles. We didn't have any trouble where we were at.

KI: I have been told that you have to go in and "timber" properly.

Laurence: Oh yes, part of the crews that worked there were timbermen, who pushed the timber down and held the rocks right where they were so they didn't fall in. The fissures where the ore was would go right straight down, sometimes they were 4 or 4 feet wide or sometimes they were 20 feet wide, but they went right straight down. And of course a lot of them were wet and had quite a bit of water in them. That's just natural for those types of mines. But they always had to timber the mines. There were crews that did nothing but timber.

KI: How long did you work in there?

Laurence: I worked there about three years. During the time I was working there I married my wife. She was a good looking girl, believe me.

KI: Tell me how you met her.

Laurence: We went to school together.

KI: When did you start dating her?

Laurence: Well, we didn't really date much in those days. We were very friendly, we went to church together.

KI: How did you decide you wanted to marry her? So something had to happen.

Laurence: We decided we'd get married.

KI: That was about a year after you came home from college. If you worked in the mines for 3 years - okay, you graduated in '32, spent a year at BYU, that was '33 and you got married in '34 and still worked in the mines for a couple of more years.

So what was it like washing his clothes, Merle?

Laurence: She didn't wash my clothes. We always washed our own clothes when we worked in the mines.

KI: Did you wash your clothes at the mine or did you wash them at home?

Laurence: You had what was called “digger clothes”. When you got through in the mines you came into a place where everyone undressed and took off the clothes that you were working in the mines with and they were all black. Your faces were black, your hands were black; we wore gloves that had deals that went clear up here on your arms. We had shoes that had metal in the toes of them so they wouldn’t mash down.

When you come back in from the mine they would haul us up to a wash room and you pulled off those clothes and you had an opportunity to wash your faces and everything about you and you would put on different clothes. Then you had those black eyes around here. It was hard to get off.

It was different deal than if you worked in the coal mines. If you worked in the coal mines a lot of them would come down with “black lung” disease. That didn’t ever happen in the gilsonite mines. The gilsonite didn’t effect anyone like that. I don’t know why it did in the coal mines. A lot of them had lung problems from working in the coal mines. I don’t know of anyone that worked in the gilsonite that had the same problem.

Well, after I got through working in the mines, I came to Vernal and Don Showalter, he was the same age as we were and he had a job as a bookkeeper for the Uintah Gas Company. The Uintah Gas Company supplied natural gas from down in the gas fields about 9 miles south and east of town, on the road to Jensen only to the right a half a mile. They discovered gas there and they had a pipeline, brought it up into Vernal and there were a lot of customers in Vernal that used that natural gas. Course you use it today but it is a different type deal. It was used for heating and cooking facilities.

Well, Don Showalter was working then for the bookkeeper for the gas company and decided to leave there and go to work for his father in the garage business. That was the start of their Ford Garage. He suggested to the owner of the Gas Company that maybe they could get me to come and work for him. So I went to work for him. I worked for him for several years and finally they decided they didn’t have enough gas to continue the business and they had to tear up all the lines and sell all the facilities. That was several years, however.

Anyway, I ended up as manager of the Gas Company before it was dismantled. I was just a young man at that time. That would have been in the late ‘30’s, before the war. So I was out of a job for a little while.

I bought a service station that also had a gasoline distribution system as part of it, we called it the Hotel Service. It was right across from the old post office.

KI: Why did you call it the Hotel Service?

Laurence: I don’t know, it was named that when I got it. There were three service stations on the intersection. I bought the Hotel Service and spent several nice years there. We bought a little home down on 2nd East and almost to 2nd South. A little white home on the east side of the road and it still stands. That was our first home. Prior to that we rented places here and there. Two different places. We bought that home and that’s where our family was born there.

KI: Can I ask Merle about her wedding?

Merle: We had two. We went to our bishop with our cousin that we told you about in high school. She was one of our witnesses and Golda Carroll was one. She had worked with me in the court house. So we went to our bishop and were married, then we went home and told Lawrence's parents then they went down and told my mother, his brother lived next door also. Then we were married again in Salt Lake on the 12th of August.

KI: I have heard several people tell me that the couple just kind of got together and decided they'd go get married. Is that really typical?

Merle: Oh, we thought about it for a little while but not very long. Anyway, then we went to Salt Lake and it more like a wedding. We had our parents go and it was a more permanent situation.

KI: Before you were married you were working in the courthouse?

Merle: I was working as a clerk in the courthouse. That's why we got Golda Massey because she was working there also; and this was in the evening and so she went down and got us a license, so we didn't have to apply before hand.

Laurence: And we are still married - 70 years - July 21st this July.

KI: So Merle, did you quit working when you had your children?

Merle: Yes, when you have three children that is a full time job. It might be interesting, my children would go shopping with me before school. [started in the fall] We would have about \$60 to buy their school clothes and that would cover everything they needed, for three children. Course they were only in the lower grades then, but they were well dressed. That kind of wage didn't last too long.

KI: Let's go back to the Hotel Service. How many years did you run it?

Laurence: I can remember well, some of those people that worked for me. Alvin Kay worked for me. He was a fun guy. He was really a fun guy. He wasn't too dependable but he was a fun guy. He would come in late for work and say, I know there's a place where we ought to go fishing. I know where we can catch a lot of fish. Well, come time to get off work we'd jump in the car and ride up that mountain that he had this special place to go fishing. Maybe we'd catch a fish and maybe we wouldn't. He was a fun guy.

I was thinking of a guy that worked for me and he was just out of high school. He went in the service and got killed. He was an Oaks. He was a very good, dependable worker. There were two families of Oaks'. This family's father was Ed Oaks and he had a whole bunch of boys. One of them is still alive, the rest of them are all dead. Then there is the Oaks family that lived in Maeser. That's the Oaks family that Elder Dallin Oaks comes from.

KI: Was his mom teaching when you were in school.

Laurence: She sure was and she was a good teacher. We both went to her classes. She was a fine

teacher and a good woman.

Merle: We knew her children at that time. They were small. Dallin was her oldest. Her husband died and she moved out here and she had these 3 children and she went to the high school to teach then after a few years she went back to Provo and took her children. She had a position at the school there that she could progress more than just be a teacher. She was very well known there.

KI: Did you sell the Hotel Service?

Laurence: I sold the Hotel Service and bought half interest in a garage. It was called the Utah Motor. It was right next to where the 7-11 Ranch Restaurant is. I think part of it was where it is now. It was just a little tiny place west of Utah Motor. We sold DeSoto, and Plymouth cars and GMC trucks. Then we had a gasoline distribution system also where we sold gasoline in bulk amounts.

KI: Did you compete with Harmon Sowards?

Laurence: We didn't really compete, we were in the same business. He had Conoco. We had the garage business also. We had 5 or 6 mechanics work there and one sales man and a couple of parts men. I usually did all of the bookkeeping as well as being the owner and manager of it.

KI: So you had a partner then.

Laurence: I had a partner and he lived in Oregon. He owned the building and we were 50 -50 partners in the business.

KI: He wasn't from here?

Laurence: He had been here and moved into Oregon. His name was Arch Lewis. We had it for several years. It was a lot of hard work. There were good times and there bad times. You had a big boom when you had the Rangely oilfields working and everyone was making a lot of money. When the boom was over and the Rangely business dropped off and the oilfields, it was pretty tough going.

KI: So you had it during the war?

Laurence: I was up to the Hotel Service in the early part of the war. I remember the gasoline stamps we had to keep, everyone had those gasoline stamps. That was a hassle. When the war ended, I was down to Utah Motor. That was pretty happy times.

KI: Tell me how the gas stamps worked.

Laurence: You had little books of stamps and you would get so many stamps for so many gallons

of gas. Everyone who drove a car always had some stamps. Those in the livestock industry had more stamps because they had to go back and forth to the mountain.

I remember we had stamps for all kinds of things.

Merle: I don't remember recall using stamps for food. Our grocery bill would be \$25 to \$40 a month, we had all the food we needed but things were not as expensive then.

KI: What kind of grocery stores in town were there? Where did you buy groceries?

Merle: There was Farmer's Market, J.C. Penny's and Ashton's. There was Irvin Eaton's butcher shop, Glenn Cooper's drug store. There was plenty of things to buy. They had what they needed. Everyone was about in the same situation. It was common to not have lots of money. That's when our children could buy school clothes for \$60.

KI: How did you keep Utah Motor?

Laurence: I was there for several years. I don't know just the dates involved. We had some disagreements and my partner bought my interest out. About that time I went across the road and did a little bookkeeping for Don Showalter and the Showalter Motor for a year or two. Did some car selling for him also. That wasn't a very satisfactory arrangement. Later I went to work for the Chamber Commerce. Do you want to know how the Chamber of Commerce was organized?

Well at that time there were three really active organizations in Vernal. There was the Lion's Club and they were older people and there was the Kiwanis Club, they were mostly businessmen around Vernal and there was a young club, called the Jaycees. I was very active in the Jaycees organization.

With the three clubs there became a desire to form a Chamber of Commerce. We had two people from each of these organizations that sat on the committee and organized the Chamber of Commerce.; decided what to be done and how many board of directors — I represented the Jaycees and so did Dale Jensen. From the Kiwanis Club there was J.D. Jones from J.C. Penny's. From the Lions there was Hugh Colton and Bry Stringham. There was another fellow from the Kiwanis - there was six of us. We made the decision then to organize the Chamber of Commerce and Hugh Colton drew up some by-laws by which we would operate. We made decisions how many would be on the board of directors and later on we had the first election. That was really the organization of the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce hired a manager, he didn't last very long. He was from Salt Lake. [Frank Ward]

Later on, I wasn't working any place, really, and they asked me if I would take over the second manager of the Chamber of Commerce, which I did. I served in the Chamber of Commerce for thirteen years, long time.

KI: That was a big time too, wasn't it. That would have been in the late '40's and into the '50's that you served?

Laurence: I was in the garage sometime during the '40's. I was in the garage in the end of the war. I was active in the Jaycees for a number of years. I don't recall the war being on during that time because we didn't have stamps to buy gas. We went to conventions here and there and I was

elected Vice President of the State Jaycees organization. I was elected down in Cedar City, the convention was there.

KI: Tell me some of the projects you worked on when you were in the Jaycees.

Laurence: We had lots of projects and a lot of money at that time. We had a lot slot machines. You know who the sheriff was? It was Herb Snyder. We had a lot of money. We did a lot of things. We won a lot awards. We went to conventions in Omaha, Philadelphia ----

KI: Can you tell me some of the guys that were in Jaycees with you? Ken Sowards was a young one, wasn't he?

Laurence: Yes, he was there. Glenn Cooper, June Hacking, Harold Duke, Dale Jensen. We had a lot of money.

KI: You did good things. You helped to build the hospital.

Laurence: Yes, we put a lot of money in the hospital. We bought the first automobile that Vernal City had for their cops, first automobile they ever had. I know because I sold it to them. We built the swimming pool; do you know where it was - right where the scout house is. We had quite a lot of controversy over it. It was a good swimming pool and the kids loved it. We gave money to different schools and different churches, we supplied money to a lot of different things.

KI: How long did those slot machines last?

Laurence: Oh, several years.

KI: Was it legal?

Laurence: Was it legal - it was illegal. The sheriff was looking the other way. He finally told us, you've got take those slot machine out, so we took them out. We sold them to a guy in Rawlins, Wyoming. I know that very well, because he owed us quite a bit of money and I went up that way and took my wife and family and stayed in Rawlins. That evening I went and found this guy and got all the money the Jaycees had coming from the sale of those slot machines. Then we went from there to Yellowstone.

We did lots of good things with the money we got, we didn't do any bad things.

KI: Was this about the same time they started having the controversy with Echo Park Dam?

Laurence: That's another phase of my life, believe me, a big part of it.

Course Echo Park was right close to us, Dinosaur National Monument was involved - this was before my time. This relates to Bry Stringham; they had a hearing here and Craig, as I recall, where someone was listening to what people had to say about forming - establishing - the Dinosaur National Monument. This was early on before Echo Park. At that time, in these meetings they had a government representative, supposedly taking the testimonies and listening

to the local people talk, including Bry Stringham. This guy assured them that Dinosaurs National Monument would not hurt anything about building a dam anywhere within the boundaries of Dinosaur National Monument, including Echo Park. Echo Park was just below the confluence of the Green River and the Yampa River. If you have ever walked out on top of Blue Mountain and looked out - you're looking right down where that dam would have been built. Have you ever been out there?

Oh, you ought to take that trip out there. You drive out there quite a long ways on Blue Mountain then walk out on that point and you're looking right down over the top where that dam would be. It is just a little tiny slot of rocks - anyway, that's where Echo Park would have been built. Course they also related to Steamboat Rock. It's just right below the confluence of those two rivers.

KI: Who was it that decided that would be a good place to build a dam?

Laurence: The Bureau of Reclamation - The Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation. Of course they done there surveys for years and years looking at those things. They needed to make power and that was a wonderful place to make power. Well, that was quite a battle.

As I started to say, they held these meetings and were given the assurance - course Bry Stringham was there and was told that creating that monument would not have any effect on building a dam there. Or at Split Mountain. If you built Echo Park you would have a real big power plant at Split Mountain too. Well, that was the battle and all the conservation organizations got involved in that. Well, shall we get into that deal?

KI: Sure. I really need to have - the problem is that the people who were involved in this aren't around anymore. So you are - and I really need to know about it.

Laurence: Well, the next phase of this, I suppose, we were battling back and forth on building Echo Park and not paying much attention to what the total Colorado River Storage Project would be. We were just one little tiny phase of what eventually was to be and what is developed today. Course the emphasis on this because it was in a monument and all the conservation organizations were opposed to it, regardless to what promises were made. Vernal was battling back and forth and trying to get help from Rock Springs, Green River, Grand Junctions. At that time we would take groups and meet at those different places and talk to all those people. Bry Stringham was the leader of that group. He was a good talker and a good leader. Once he knew what to do he knew how to do it.

Well, the next phase of that was we had to go to Washington and get something approved by congress. We were there for a long periods of time. Too long, when we went we had go back and stay for 30 days or longer. Then, travel wasn't fast and easy like it is today.

KI: What did you do when you were back there? Did you have to go around and talk to individual congressmen or something.?

Laurence: You know, the authorization by the senate was done one fall and Echo Park was in the bill but when we went back the next spring, and they started to talk again, on the House side they

deleted Echo Park and put Flaming Gorge in. But also part of that Bill was Glen Canyon and the Curecanti Units.

This public law 485, 84th Congress - second session. An act authorizing to construct, operate and maintain the following initial units of the Colorado River Storage Projects, consisting of dams, reservoirs, power plants, transmission facilities, and appurtenance works. Curecanti, Flaming Gorge, Navajo Dam and Reservoir only, Glen Canyon. It provides that Curecanti would only be constructed to certain heights. That's in Colorado. It was signed by Arthur V. Watkins, he was our Senator at that time.

KI: Was there supposed to be both Flaming Gorge and Echo Park or was Flaming Gorge a substitution.

Laurence: Flaming Gorge was a substitute. People in charge in the House said they didn't have enough votes to get the Bill through the House without making a substitution. So they made that substitution primarily with the opposition of the environmental groups.

When we went back to Congress the following spring, the House made those changes which the Senate agreed to.

KI: How did you feel when they gave you Flaming Gorge instead of Echo Park, were you upset?

Laurence: Well, I think at that time we always thought later on some people would change their mind and we'd probably be able to get Echo Park. But that isn't the way things work out. We spent a lot of time in Washington; Hugh Colton, Bry Stringham and myself. When we first went back to hearings we had maybe 30 or 40 people from Utah, primarily from Roosevelt and Vernal and the surrounding area that went back there. A whole mob of them. There is a picture, I'm not in the picture, taken with a lot of those people that were in that group at that time.

This is the first hearings that went on. George D. Clyde, very prominent person. He became governor as a result of what happened on this particular effort. It gave him the name. I think he was working up at Utah State University. He was back there in Washington with us for weeks and weeks. When we went back as that group, we visited every House member there was there. There is about 400 House members. We had people going and knocking on doors and urging them to vote for it. That was when Echo Park was in the Bill, though, urging them to vote for it.

A little bit further on, we became a little bit more sophisticated in what we were trying to do and what we were trying to accomplish. When we were back there I had particular assignments; Ival Gosslin was there as a director from the Upper Colorado River Commission, which represented the four Upper Basin States, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. There was one government representative on that Commission, that's the way that was organized and is still organized that way today.

Course, that goes back to the Compacts. There were two compacts; the first compact which divided the river between the upper and the lower basin states and the second compact which was agreed upon here in Vernal and signed several months later. That divided the water among the four

Upper Basin States. Colorado had the major portion, Utah had the next portion, Wyoming had a portion and New Mexico had a portion. That was the Upper Basin Compact. I don't remember

the dates but I remember what it was all about.

KI: Even today, Utah doesn't use all of its water, does it. It gets sent on down to-----

Laurence: I'll bet, today, it does. Because what it does; in the compacts we guarantee to make the certain delivery at Lee's Ferry, which is the dividing point, which is just below Glen Canyon Dam - is Lee's Ferry, and at that point we agreed to deliver to the Lower Basin States a certain amount of water every year. When you have dry years, like this one and you don't have enough water, we still have to make those deliveries to the Lower Basin States, regardless, they have that first right. Then we have to divided the balance between the Upper Basin States on a certain formula.

Supposedly, when you have Glen Canyon with a lot of water, which it has had in, we had surplus water. I suppose the surplus water went on down below. Course, Mexico get part of that water too. When you have dry years, like we have been having, we still have to make that delivery to the Lower Basin States. The amount we store down there, which supposedly represents our share, I think we are using all the water we are entitled to in these drought years.

KI: How did you get involved in the whole water issue? Coming from garage and service station background. How did you get involved - you weren't even an agriculturalist?

Laurence: How do you know? I raise a garden.

KI: I raise a garden too, but water issues are just major, major things.

Laurence: I don't know. It just seems you kind of float to one thing to another. The Chamber was primarily involved in the promotion of Echo Park. We had committees then - a lot of the financing - I didn't have money to go back and spend a month in Washington D.C. and buy meals and hotels and thing. The money that was involved in paying those things for me was provided by the county but I was working for the Chamber of Commerce and they were paying my wages. - Merle got the money. We didn't make much money either.

KI: Wasn't there, among these states, these Upper and Lower Basin States, particularly the Upper Basin States, wasn't there money coming from each of the states to help fund the whole push?

Laurence: Well, Utah Congress passed a bill that allowed them and Bry Stringham was in the Utah Congress at that time, allowed each county, if they wished to levy a certain amount of money to provided some money to help pay for some of the cost of those people doing that particular kind of work.

In Utah there was an association that did that. Bry Stringham was in the legislature and he helped pass some of those bills. We had an association and he was the president of it for a number of years. I remember this well because; we decided we needed to get resolutions from every one of the county commissioners that were involved up and down the states that were obtaining water from the Central Utah Project. I know - I went up and down the state to a lot of different counties and met with the commissioners and got those resolutions passed. I went to St.

George, Cedar City, Loa, I had friends in both places after that. Bry was working more around the Salt Lake area and Utah County area.

When we went to Washington, I had definite assignments of things that needed to be worked on. One was Labor Unions, another was different agricultural groups. The REA - Moon Lake, that was one of them that was involved. There were others I had to work with and try to get them to come along and support the Colorado River Storage Project.

I know very well, because they hired me while I was there to make certain trips and make certain contacts with different people, particularly with people that were involved with newspapers. I had one trip down to North Carolina, spent four or five days down there waiting to talk to the head man of newspaper - he was causing some difficulty for one of the congressman that, supposedly was going to vote for the Storage Project.

I went up to Albany, New York, that's the capital, right? I spent several days up there to see a man there. He wasn't a newspaper man but he was causing some problems with one of the representatives that was going to support the Storage Project Act. He was giving one of the congressmen a bad time.

Then I came clear down the Hudson River to New York City, on a bus. I'd get off the bus in some of the towns and stop and visit with newspaper people. I spent one night at Poughkeepsie, talked to a newspaper man the next morning. Finally got down to New York City. Got on a plane and went on to Washington D.C.

One winter it was cold, cold - one of the coldest places I had ever been in my life and that was in St. Louis. The REA's [Rural Electric Association] were having a convention there and there were a lot of these people that I knew with the REA from here, Ray Brown in particular, I knew him well. I stayed there several days - man it was cold on the river.

I had some interesting times trying to get the Storage Project passed.

KI: Do you feel that is was successful?

Laurence: It was very successful. You bet, absolutely.

KI: I'm impressed by that because it was almost like "Vernal's Golden Age" or something.

Laurence: You remember Ernie Untermann [Jr.]? He was there. He was an environmentalist, really. In the true word of an environmentalist too. He was always testifying. He really made an impression on people.

KI: After this was all taken care of and you came back to Vernal, did you still work for the Chamber after that?

Laurence: Yes, I did. We had been told, because of our efforts to try and get those things done first - to get major development accomplished, maybe we should be the first one to have a unit constructed and that was the Vernal Unit of the Central Utah Project. Do you know what the Vernal Unit is? The Vernal Unit of the Central Utah Project is the Steinkaker Reservoir. The feeder canal going in and the service canal coming out and the drains that have been built throughout the valley.

KI: Is the Red Fleet too?

Laurence: No, that was the Jensen Unit of the Central Utah Project. That came along later on. The Vernal Unit was the first one constructed. To have a contracting group, you had to contract with the United States Government that you would repay certain costs of each one of the units. You had to have a Unit that was authorized to contract so that was where we organized the board of directors of the Vernal Unit of the Central Utah Project - Uintah Water Conservancy District. So we had to organized the Uintah Water Conservancy District, which we did.

TAPE TWO

KI: You were organizing the Water Conservancy District.

Laurence: Well, there were quite a few prominent people involved in that organization. Bry Stringham, Hugh Colton, Chuck Henderson.

KI: Your were still manager of the Chamber? How long did you do that?

Laurence: Yes. I was manager of the Chamber of Commerce about 13 years. I'm not exactly sure. When the Conservancy District was organized, some of the people that were involved thought I should go to work for the Uintah Conservancy District, which I did. I became their manager. We worked with the Bureau of Reclamation of creating a contract. When we had the contract completed to our satisfaction then we had to have the vote of the people. The people voted in districts and they voted, over whelming, for the establishment and the construction of the Vernal Unit. Following that they went to work and built the dam and they built canals. They had lots of problems here and there. Some people said it would never work. You wouldn't get water down there, if you got it there it wouldn't run here. Your directions are wrong.

KI: I can tell by the way you laugh - okay, everybody has an opinion, don't they? But worked, huh?

Laurence: I can remember Bry Stringham coming back one day and saying, one of the engineers in the Bureau of Reclamation. Parley Neeley, come back to him and saying, look, my neighbor runs the Vernal Express and he has been told by one of his friends that they had looked at the running of that water clear out there and it would never work. That water wouldn't run out there, it was higher out there. They had looked at it from a visual spy-glass deal and it was up hill all around there, wouldn't work, what about that Parley Neeley? Parley Neeley said well, it will work, don't worry about it. They just didn't understand the slope of the earth.

I remember another occasion; I was in my office, one of the engineers that was working on that canal going around there. He called out to the office - look, you better get out here and help me. I'm here at such and such a place and this gals got a shotgun, she's going to shoot me. I went down and got Hugh Colton, he was our attorney, and the way we went out there. Sure enough that gal was sitting there with a shotgun and he was afraid she was gong to use it on him.

KI: People get pretty emotional about water, don't they?

Laurence: Ya, especially if you're going to run a canal through their place.

KI: What did you do?

Laurence: Hugh explained to her about where that canal was going to go and what it had to do and what right of way problems there were. She finally calmed down. I remember that very plainly.

KI: Did you retire working for the Conservancy District or did you have another job besides that one?

Laurence: No. I went to work for the Uintah Water Conservancy District and retired from there after working there for about 20 years.

KI: Do you remember what year it was when you retired?

Laurence: Well, I think I retired when I was 72 years old and I was born in 1914. Where does that make me?

KI: Okay, 1986. What have you done since then?

Laurence: Well, were not through with all that water. The real problem came when we decided to build the Jensen Unit of the Central Utah Project. The Jensen Unit was Red Fleet. Before we could build Red Fleet, however, we got involved in where the water went when it sunk in the Dryfork Sinks.

Well, everyone was aware, when there was certain amount of water coming down Dryfork, all at once it sunk in big holes. A long, long time ago they decided to flume that around those sink areas and they built those flumes around there. Some of the flumes are still standing.

They built a sawmill on the mountain and in the wintertime they skidded those logs down there to build that flume. They finally put the water in the flumes and they didn't understand the dynamics of water and how fast it would go, and it washed a lot of the flume out and sunk in the ground again. That was probably the end of that flume. But, everyone was saying, well, why don't we build another pipeline down there and catch all that water. That water is going someplace, where is it coming up? It is coming up down in Jones Hole or is it coming up someplace else. Well, we were concerned about Dryfork Sinks.

We had an engineer and he was with the Soil Conservation, I don't remember his name. He said lets go take an airplane trip, I want to see something. We flew back and forth between Dryfork and Ashley Creek. There is springs up in Ashley Creek, just above the mouth of the gorge. We flew back and forth two or three times. He said, look, I know where that water is going. That water is coming up in Ashley Creek Gorge.

So as a result of those particular conversations and others conversations about where the water went. We decided to put dye in the water and we had a monitoring station in Ashley Creek and we dumped the dye in three different areas at about the same time. As I recall about 60

hours, everyone down in Vernal had pink water. It all showed up in the pipeline; it was monitoring the amount of water that was colored. About all that water showed up in everyone's pipes in Vernal. So that solved that particular problem; where the water went when it was sunk in Dryfork. It just followed that strata clear through and came up in Ashley Creek Canyon.

We also put dye in several other places to find out where the water went. We did that on the Brush Creek. N.J. Meagher built a flume that kept the water from going into that big cave in Little Brush Creek. He built a flume to take the water around that cave entrance and dump it back in Little Brush Creek, so he could get the water. Well, he had a lot of money. The guys down in Jensen, for some reason, didn't think that was working. When he did that they thought they were losing some of their water. So we also put dye in the sinks in Brush Creek and both of those forks in Brush Creek came up just above the phosphate mines there. All the dye came up at that point. So there wasn't any water lost any place.

The water N.J. was getting wasn't his water, it was somebody else's water. He had that big ranch down there [in Jensen] and he was getting water he wasn't entitled too. Those old farmers down there felt that was all wrong in the first place, it was proved to be right.

When we started to build the Red Fleet Dam we got into a lot of controversy.

KI: Marv didn't want to sell his property, for one thing, did he?

Laurence: Ya, but he did. Well, he owned that property - had a little ranch down in there and in the lower end was where Red Fleet was constructed. But there was a lot of objection to it. Stan Anderson was one of the big objecter. Marv wasn't a big objecter. Stan Anderson and several others.

KI: What was it they objected to particularly?

Laurence: "Well, those phosphate mines were up above there and those phosphate mines would break and that would come down and ruin all the water that would be there." Course they were objecting to the cost. There had to be a cost in everything.

We had to sell the water. We had to sell a certain amount of water before they would agree to begin construction. Well, who would buy the water? The people down below, the farmers, they weren't objecting to buying the water. But the people that were involved with drinking water were all city, Ashley Valley Water and Sewer, Maeser. We were involved in trying to dispose of a certain amount of that water, not all of it, but a certain amount and of course there was cost involved in it and the costs kept going up. About the time that were starting the construction on Red Fleet, we had a contract and it was approved and the Teton Dam broke - why then they were really moaning and groaning. "Those dams will break".

About that time the engineers got really concerned about the construction and every time they would turn a shovel over there would be another engineer there. He was from Denver or he was from Salt Lake or he was from Provo, or he was from some place else and the cost just went sky high.

Hugh Colton and I went back to Washington and talked to the congressman back and told him what the problems were and the costs were and they put a rider onto a bill that reduced the cost of it - a lot of money - millions of dollars.

KI: In other words the federal government picked up more.

Laurence: They were paying some of the price as a result of what actually happened up at Teton. The problems we had after that because they were doubly concerned about dams breaking.

We were having objections because of the costs going and objections because of the water being tainted with the leavings from the phosphate mine. Course they have a big dam up there, you've seen that dam, have you not with water in it. Now they use water to pump phosphate up over the mountain to Rock Springs. Well, we had a lot of problems and we kept working with it.

Vernal City agreed to buy a certain amount of the water and then Ashley Valley Water and Sewer - just Ashley Valley Water at that time, they had taken some part of the area that Vernal City was serving and as a result they agreed to purchase that portion that Vernal City had agreed to purchase. We had a hard time getting it done but we finally got it done.

We didn't have any trouble selling the irrigation water in the Jensen area, all the way, right from the start of the dam, on down; everyone was happy with buying some of the water. We worked with them and the contracts. The total allotment of water we had for irrigation use was taken care in short order. Course we were dealing with individuals and dealing with [water] companies down there.

Red Fleet is a very worthwhile project; for a number of reasons. It's a great recreational area, it's a great service to the agricultural people. They pump the water now into the treatment plant up here and at certain times of the year it's easier to treat it than water out of Ashley Creek because of the sediment that comes down the Creek at times. The sediment isn't in reservoir water. It's a very worthwhile project. Regardless of whether people don't like it, didn't like it, but they like today.

Merle: Ask her if she's been up to the "hole".

Laurence: Do you know what the "hole" is?

KI: No.

Laurence: You know where the treatment plant is?

KI: Yes.

Laurence: Across the road from that treatment plant they are building a big storage unit, underground storage unit, we call it the "Hole" - ten million gallons. It's more than half finished now. They are getting the roof on a lot of it. It is a concrete roof, eventually they will have storage there to put water out to the whole area. Maeser bought part, Ashley Valley bought part, Vernal City bought part, Uintah Water Conservancy District part of it. That doesn't make any more water but it makes more water available at certain times when you need it. Because there will be water that has been purified; it has been put in that tank and when the demand is great you draw off from it. When the demand isn't so great, you store it. It's an equalizer; that's what it is. Everyone in the valley has bought into that big storage tank.

KI: Is there anything more you want to tell me about water?

Laurence: [laughs] Why sure I've got a lot I could tell you about water. In the water business, a long time ago, I think probably, I was only the second or third person that ever went down to, what they called the Colorado River Water Users Association, and they meet in Las Vegas. Early on when I was the manager of the Uintah Water Conservancy District I decided I would go down there and see what was going on with that organization. I think there was only one other person from Utah. I went to the meeting and listened to what they had to say and of course there representatives there from all of the Basin States, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Lower Basin - Arizona, California, Nevada. There representatives from all of those states, but they had formed what they called the Colorado River Water Users Association. I told Bry and some of the guys here that we ought to go down there and meet and see what's going on. It's a going organization. I'm a past president of that organization, I know all about it.

KI: That's where the gold watch came from, huh?

Laurence: I was one of the early presidents from Utah, maybe the first president from Utah.

Well, when you got past the Uintah Water Conservancy District and the Bureau and some of the people in the state, we have to have an organization that will contract for the construction of rest of the Central Utah Project. They said the people in the Uintah County area ought to be part of that. We didn't think so. We had built Vernal but not Jensen. They said no, to build the Jensen Unit you will have to contract with the Central Utah Water Conservancy District.

All of the counties that were involved in getting water were trying to get organized, like Salt Lake and Utah County, Wasatch County, Duchesne County, Uintah County, then it went on down into the Juab-Nephi area, then down into the Sevier Basin area. The county commission asked to serve on the committee to organize the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, which I did sit on along with people from everyone of the other counties.

Eventually we came up with an organization and the representation. They tried to equalize it; so many from the here and so many from the Salt Lake area. We had three from Uintah County, three from Duchesne County, two from Wasatch County. I think there were just three from Salt Lake County and three from Utah County. One from Joab and one from the Sevier Basin area.

Anyway I sat on that group that organized that particular unit to do the construction on the rest of Central Utah. And that is still going and they're still meeting. I was on that board for several years. Then they kicked me off. [laugh] I was never the president nor the manager, but I represented Uintah County. Bry Stringham was on the board and one of the Morrill's from Tridell was on it. I can't remember his first name. He was a very intelligent person. [Blayne Morrill]

Anyway we got the Central Utah Board organized then we had to get approval in every one of the counties. We had a tough time getting people to vote for it in Uintah County because they already what they needed. But it past and the works have been going on. It takes some water from the Uintah Basin and transports it across into the Strawberry Reservoir and out of the Strawberry Reservoir down through Diamond Fork and into Utah Lake. Jordanell is also a part of that, it's on the head of the Provo River. A lot of that water is going into Salt Lake and a lot more

will go to Salt Lake because that's where the heavy use is going to be.

KI: Isn't that what makes people a little bit angry, though, is that they are saying why can't we keep our water here?

Laurence: We don't lose any water out here. The water that is lost goes down into the Duchesne area, we don't lose any water.

KI: Like from the Duchesne River or what?

Laurence: Duchesne County, but actually it's the headwaters of the Duchesne River, right. The tunnel comes through and drops into Strawberry. There are two or three tunnels. There's a dam on Rock Creek and that's where the tunnel starts, at Rock Creek. That's where the furthest east tunnel starts.

I just got an invitation for the celebration of the completion of the Diamond Fork System of Central Utah Project, at the Marriott Hotel, June 30th.

KI: Are you going to?

Laurence: I don't think so. I'd like too but I don't think I can do it. Well, that ought to cover the water.

KI: Why don't you tell me a little about your family.

Laurence: I have two very nice girls and they have families. All the family that Jeanie has lives on the Wasatch Front. Lou Ellen has some family where she lives in Grand Junction area but she has some that lives in the Salt Lake area. We get to see Jeanie almost every day. Jeanie comes and helps us. Lou Ellen comes also maybe two or three times a month. [Lou Ellen and Bobby Hunt - Jean and Ken Anderton]

KI: What kind of church callings?

Laurence: Oh, just the usual church callings. We had callings to work in the Provo Temple, which we did for 3 or 4 years, then we worked in the Vernal Temple when it opened. Then we got to old.

Merle worked with the little kids, Primary, Jr. Sunday School.

KI: You lived down town, how long did you live there?

Laurence: Not very long. We bought a house on 2500 West just north of the Maeser Store Corner. We had a white house, it's still standing, very nice, white house on the west side of the road. We lived there for a long time. When we moved up here we were the only house around here.

We sold that little house we had in Maeser for \$12,500, when we built this house, we built it, including the land; we have three acres of land and it was just a little over \$30,000. We

have a nice view from all directions.

KI: After water - what is there?

Laurence There's golf.

KI: Were you one of the big supporters when they increased the size of the golf course from 9 to 18 holes? Was that a big deal?

Laurence: That was a big deal. That was one of the awards I got.

They are looking at some of the awards Lawrence had.

KI: Membership for life.

Laurence: National Water Resources. National. In Hawaii. That was something.

KI: I'm going to read this [award]

Lawrence Y. Siddoway worked on a team from Utah and surrounding states to obtain passage of the Upper Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956. He represented Uintah County in creating the Central Utah Water Conservancy District and was appointed to serve on the board of directors. He is the first and only manager of the Uintah Water Conservancy District formed in 1956. Lawrence is serving on the board of directors of the Colorado River Water Users Association and served as its president for two years. He a board member of the Utah Waters Users Association and was president during 1984. He currently serves in the Indian Water Claims Committee of the NWRA which is the National Water Resources Association.

Laurence: Let me tell you a little bit more about what I've done.

Hugh Colton and I decided we needed to understand a little bit more about where our water came from. We would start by going yearly into the mountains to try and determine where all the water came from; on the heads of the streams, reservoirs, the fisheries, everything on the high and beautiful Uintah Mountains. We started out many, many years ago. The first trip we weren't sure how we should pack, so we hired a guy to do the packing for us. We went up above the Dryfork area, that was the first trip - head of the Dryfork.

The next year we decided we didn't need a packer to go with us, we'd do our own packing. So Hugh and I went together for another year or two in certain areas and at that point we decided it was a little too difficult for two hard-minded people to go together for a week. So we needed someone else to go with us. Hugh had a partner in the law firm - Whitney Hammond, he became the judge. Very congenial, a good guy. So after that Whitney always went with us. Later on we invited Bill Gibson, he was a banker at First Security. Every year for 35 years we got together one week in August; we picked August because about that time most of the flies would be gone. The flies would swarm on those horses and drive them crazy. A little later in the season most of the flies would be gone. For 35 years we made one of those trips to somewhere on the high and beautiful Uintah Mountains. Every stream, every reservoir, north slope, south slope, head of the Duchesne, Grand

Daddy Lakes. We didn't go as far as the Mirror Lake but we went to the head of the Duchesne Rivers. Head of everyone of the other lakes and reservoirs on the South Slope and to a lot of them on the North Slope. We visited with just about every reservoir that there is in the Uintah Mountains and every stream. Whit always knew where all the good fishing was, Hugh never went fishing.

We understood WELL where the water came from and where it went. Where all the lakes were. Good time, good packers. Whit was a good fisherman, I did my share of fishing too.

KI: Did you go hunting?

Laurence: Oh yes. I went hunting. Anyway-----

Looking at pictures

That's Bill Gibson and myself. We're at a sheep camp and the guy is getting a little bit of mutton out to give to us. You got have to mutton if you're going into the Uintah's, we always had sheep camps up there that we could go to and get a little bit of mutton and sour dough biscuits. It doesn't get much better than that, it was great times.

I play golf. I play golf 4 or 5 times a week. I play with Dan Price, Carl Collett: he owned the place up by Flaming Gorge. Collett and his boys owned the raft deal below the Dam. They had the motel, the store and café. They owned all of that at one time and he sold it and lives down here now. George Gerber, he's a talker.

KI: Do you ever play with Durrell Chivers?

Laurence: I know Durrell well, in fact, Durrell worked for me in the garage for a while. He plays golf. I don't play with him. I call him a crusher because he was a chiropractor.

END OF INTERVIEW